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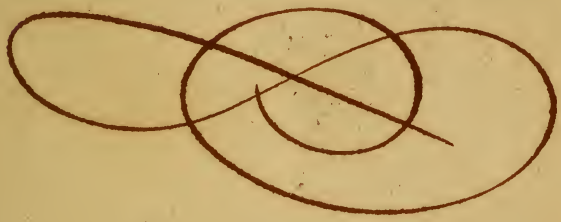


J. Kidder Del

Pendleton Boston.

"She then asked her companion to go with her into the woods — where they might pray together." *P. 20.*

Pub. by Peirce & Parker. 9. Cornhill.

BOSTON.

MEMOIR

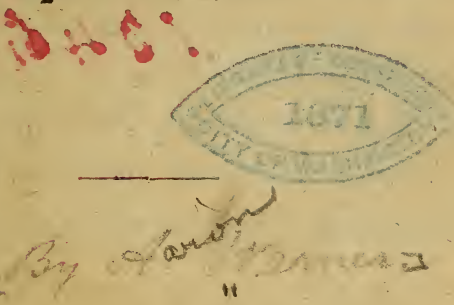
OF

FLORENCE KIDDER,

WHO DIED

IN MEDFORD, MASS., APRIL, 1832.

Aged Eleven Years.



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INTRODUCTION.

Nothing affords to the Christian a fuller evidence of the truth and the surpassing value of his religion than its practical efficacy.—Especially its practical influence in seasons of trial. Nor is there any other system of religion which can bear a comparison with the Christian faith in this respect.

Were there as many infidels who die in triumph as there are Christians, one source of evidence of the system of the cross would be annihilated and the mind might be perplexed between contending testimony.

But though there may be solitary instances of quiet, or stupid indifference as the result of infidelity or of erroneous views of religion, they stand visibly wide from the peace and high elevation of soul which spring out of a belief of the religion of the cross—whenever, and wherever, it has been embraced.

The chamber, where the believer in the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ dies, is light and peaceful above every other scene of departure from this world. It is when Jesus is seen sitting on the right hand of God that heaven opens, and the soul full of the Holy Ghost mounts upward in joyful flight. There is no other place to go from earth to heaven so privileged as this.

Were there a solitary instance of infidelity, that had run the benevolent career of Paul, and died in the majesty of infidel triumph, as Paul died under the influence of Christian principles, we should hardly know what to think. But there are no such careers of benevolent and dy-

ing infidelity. This is true, to a greater or less degree when applied to all false systems. God speaks in his providence the same as in his revelation.

" The Path *of the just*, (not the path of error) is as the shining light that shineth more and more to the perfect day."

Practical results will tell; on a great scale where truth lies. In this point of view then, the religion of Christ must be true. There is no other course so light with God's approbation as this. From the death of Christ till this day there is testimony repeated and loud to the efficacy of Christian truth. A host unnumbered lift up their voice and cry, " This is the way, the truth, and the life."

So it was the case of the following narrative. On the lips of childhood, praise was perfected in death.

Age and middle life, little children, all, may look and learn, from this case what is truth. We cannot but remark too, how adapted is the

religion of the gospel to all minds. The cross of Christ is eminently a system which "suffers little children to come unto it and forbids them not." It is not so with most other systems. Human wisdom seems unable to invent any error which shall meet the wants and intellect of the highest and yet be easy to the weakness of the child. But so plain are the doctrines of the cross, that a little child can understand them, and draw from them the purest and richest consolations. It was so in the case of this little child. She leaned on these doctrines with a confidence as entire, and a soul as transported, as Paul, when "in a strait betwixt two, and desiring to depart, he wot not what to choose."

We wish the readers of this little book to look at this narrative, and to learn from it not only the value of the religion of Christ, but to mark the weight of evidence, which such practical results in death, give to views such as were entertained by this child. Let the reader ask

himself, if there are any other views, which are stamped with evidence so repeated and signal from God; any others which have so triumphed in suffering and death as these.

Hoping that this little book may subserve the interests of true piety, and be made of special service to youth and children, it is submitted to the reader.

A. WARNER.

Medford, June, 1832.

CHAPTER I.

The subject of the following narrative, Florence Kidder, was the daughter of Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Mary A. Kidder, of Medford, a village about five miles from Boston. Her father and mother are both members of the church in Medford, where they have resided for the last eight years.

Florence was born in Boston, December 30, 1820. She had been the subject of parental religious instruction from her early childhood, and had attended the Sabbath School most of the time since she was old enough to do so.

She was a child of amiable manners and of quick and tender sympathies. No peculiar seriousness however was visible, till some time in the summer of 1831.

Miss Brigham, her instructress in the Medford High School, speaks of Florence in the following manner.

'From my earliest acquaintance with her, she seemed disposed to listen to religious conversation, and frequently came to me with enquiries of what was her duty, and if the indulgence of various little habits common to children, was sinful. She was always remarkable for openness and sincerity of character, and though naturally of a quick temper, always sought to make reparation for any wrong she had done, as soon as the excitement of the moment had subsided. Previously to her becoming, as we believed, a Christian, she seemed to possess an acute sense of right and wrong, and would often come to me and confess she had transgressed some regulation of the school, or spoken unkindly of me, for requiring something she did not like to perform, and say, 'I have not been happy since; will you forgive me?'

But it was not until some time in June, 1831, that she manifested any particular anxiety in relation to her immortal welfare. Though she frequently, when conversed with, assented to the necessity of a change of heart, and of pre-

paration for death, she never appeared to feel her need of a Saviour until the period I have mentioned. I was first apprised of her state of feeling by finding upon my desk a note addressed to me, which on opening I found contained as nearly as I can recollect, the following words—

"My dear teacher, I am a lost sinner, can you tell me what I shall do to be saved?

F. Kidder."

I looked up and saw her face bathed in tears. (Several other notes of similar import accompanied hers.) During the devotional exercises of that morning, she seemed overwhelmed with a sense of her guilt, and, regardless of the presence of many, whom she could not expect to sympathize with her, she wept without restraint, and sobbed aloud. When prayers were over, I called her to me, and endeavored to say what I thought necessary to one under the influence of emotions so interesting.—In answer to my inquiries, what at that time made her so anxious for salvation, she said, "When I was so sick a few days ago, I thought perhaps I should die, and if I did, I knew I could not go to heaven, unless my sins were forgiven, and I determined

then to try and be a Christian." I took her Bible, and marked such passages as I thought would convince her still more deeply of her guilt, and others which invited sinners to Christ, with promises of acceptance to all who were truly penitent. That morning, she visited her pastor, accompanied by several others. For several weeks following she continued evidently under strong convictions, and listened with the utmost eagerness to religious conversation and instruction. Her Bible and Village Hymn book were her constant companions, during the leisure moments she had after her allotted tasks were performed. I do not recollect that she expressed any hope that she was a Christian, until some days after the protracted meeting in this place. This intelligence, as was her custom, she communicated to me in the following note.

"I believe, my dear teacher, I have found Jesus, and given my heart to him. If it was God's will that I should die now, I think I should not be afraid, for I believe Christ would take me to himself in glory."

CHAPTER II.

From this period to the commencement of that illness, which terminated her life, she continued to manifest a deep interest in religious subjects. She was always regular in her attendance at the prayer meeting established by me for those at that time anxiously inquiring the way of salvation. At these meetings it was my custom to select such short pieces for reading as were adapted to their understandings and feelings. I encouraged their asking questions, and was often surprised and gratified to find in the questions proposed by Florence, evidence so strong, of deep thought and feeling upon the subject. She seemed to feel that religion was to enter into the every day employments of her life, and frequently remarked, "Miss B. we must give an account of *all* the deeds done in the body."—On one occasion, a companion nearly of her own age was

detected in an untruth. This was a fault I always reproved with severity; and after I had dismissed the offender, I expressed the pain I felt, at finding one of my pupils guilty of a sin, against which God had manifested such signal marks of his displeasure. Florence seemed deeply to feel the wickedness of which her school-mate had been guilty; and in a letter written a few days afterward to a friend, she expressed her sorrow, that one who was professing to seek for salvation should commit so great a sin against God. At the seasons of recess, she with another to whom she was much attached, was in the habit of retiring at a distance from the school-room, with such of their companions as they could persuade to go with them for prayer; a practice which was continued as long as the weather would allow them to be abroad; and afterwards they held meetings at noon in the school-room, or, if any were there who did not wish to join them, in another room. She remarked to me one day that she feared —— was not a Christian, although she thought herself one, for said she, "her temper is as bad as ever, and I think she does not always speak the truth." I had tried much to

impress upon the minds of F. and others the importance of faithfulness in the discharge of every duty; I had told them if they were really Christians, they would be more obedient to parents, teachers and those who had the care of them, and more affectionate to brothers, sisters and companions. Florence appeared convinced that this was a necessary consequence of conversion, and she said "I do try Miss B., to be more obedient, and to govern my temper; do you think I am as impatient and fretful as I used sometimes to be?" After pausing for a time as if in deep thought, said "do you think Miss B. if I have repented of my sins and God has forgiven them, that at the Judgment day they will be brought up and every body will know them?" I replied, that the Bible said, "Every work must be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad." "But it also says," she answered, "That he will remember their sins no more, and will blot out their transgressions; and I supposed it was only sins not repented of, that were brought into judgment." She thought much of the importance of prayer and said she believed she loved to pray now, for she never forgot it as she

used to—that she often prayed for the conversion of her companions, and that they might not grieve the Spirit to forsake them—that for herself, she feared if she had not become a Christian then she never should, for the Bible said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."'

CHAPTER III.

It was during the period of her peculiar religious impressions that she first fell under my more immediate personal instructions.

Her mind I found deeply impressed with a sense of her guilt and earnestly alive to the interests of her soul.

On the morning alluded to by her instructress, she came to my house with several others of the school. Her mind seemed deeply engaged in her spiritual concerns.

The particulars of her conversation I did not treasure up, but well recollect that it was a scene of uncommon interest. Nor did I then doubt that it was divine influence which had awakened the attention of these little ones to eternal things.

She listened with peculiar attention to what I said to her and went away with a heavy heart and her eyes full of tears. This was

the first visit she made me. She afterward came often and always appeared truly intent on learning her duty, and anxious to be a Christian. She often expressed a great desire to converse with me on the subject of religion, but seemed fearful lest she should occupy too much of my time.

Her anxiety to be present at religious meetings will be seen by a little note which she addressed to her mother.

There was to be an inquiry meeting in the evening, and her little heart was strongly set upon attending it. Her father's house being some distance from the meeting, she addressed her mother in the following simple and affectionate manner.

My Dear Mother,

"I have one thing to tell you. E—— and I went up to Mr. W.'s to have him pray for us; and he said he wanted us to go to the inquiry meeting. He talked with us; and I shall have God for my friend. He is my staff, and I am not afraid to die. I want to go to meeting to night, for he has saved me.

Do this for me, dear mother, and I will be a more godly child.

From your daughter

FLORENCE."

She began about this time to indulge the hope, that God had given her a new heart. She said she hoped she loved God; and she believed she did, for she loved to pray to him. Her father, one day, in conversation with her, asked her, why Nathan Dickerman should have a new heart, while so many other children did not have such a heart?

She readily replied, "Because *he wanted* it."

CHAPTER IV.

It was her practice frequently to meet with her companions who were serious for the purpose of holding with them a prayer meeting. This practice began early in her seriousness, as has been remarked by her instructress. One day, while sitting in school, she was observed to weep and to manifest deep anxiety of mind. One of her companions, seeing this, asked her, what was the matter.

She replied, that 'she did not love God, and that was the reason why she wept.'

She then asked her companion to go with her into the woods, where they might pray together. And when they were in the woods alone, Florence continued to weep, as she knelt down with her friend and earnestly prayed to God, that he would give her a new heart.

Ever after the change in her feelings she

was in the habit of continuing these meetings with a few of her companions.

In a retired spot in the woods about one fourth of a mile from her father's is the place where she withdrew to offer up her prayers, to read her Bible, and sing her hymns.

Here, surrounded on all sides by a grove of fir trees, and closely shut in by the thick foliage; she engaged in the service which, no doubt, will be her theme of endless delight.

As I stood on the spot where she had kneeled and prayed, I could not but reflect, how appropriate it is to worship the God of all this beautiful scenery by which I am surrounded. It was the Bible indeed, which opened the heart of this little child, and enkindled a new and holy interest in her soul. It was the cross of Christ, on which she delighted to linger. But it was in the secluded grove, that even this theme come over her heart more full and fresh with joy.—The story once told me of her grandfather by a gentleman in this place came fresh to my recollection; and I could not but feel that the prayers of the grandparent were answered on the child, and that the spirit of

the aged saint, long since in glory, was indeed upon this his distant descendant.

"One day, wishing to see Deacon Kidder," said he, "I went into the woods where he was at work.

As I drew near to the place all was still; I went on however, for I saw by the trees that were cut down, that he had been there. When I came close to the spot I heard some one talking. I went to the place, and what should I see there, but the good Deacon K. on his knees in prayer! I turned away deeply affected with the sight, and left him to his prayers."

Was it not here, that God answered a prayer offered up by this saint in the woods, on the third generation, and fashioned the heart of little Florence to a sympathy with one whom she never knew?

Doubtles these kindred souls now worship together above.

Often with her Bible and Hymn Book, she would retire to this spot, or, if the weather did not permit, to her chamber at home to read and pray with her companions.

What an example to older Christians and

to all the readers of this little memoir! Did Christians *ripe* in years follow this example, it would give life to their social piety, and elevate high their Christian intercourse.

CHAPTER V.

She used also often to ask her mother to go with her into a retired chamber and pray with her.

Often when visited by some of her companions she would ask permission to be absent from the family, as they then supposed to play with them. But it was afterwards ascertained, that her object was to retire for a season of prayer, that she might do them good. This practice of retiring for prayer, sometimes alone, and sometimes with her companions, was continued with greater or less frequency, until her last sickness. She always manifested great anxiety lest she herself should be deceived as to her hope; and also much concern for the spiritual welfare of her little companions, who were serious at the same time with her. She had many fears lest some of them should go back again to the world, and lose their reli-

gious impressions. She was therefore accustomed to converse much with them and to write them letters on the subject of religion. From two or three of her letters I make the following extracts. Speaking of some, in whom she felt particularly interested, she says, "I feel so dreadfully, if they should obtain a false hope, which would be worse than before they were serious." Concerning one in particular, whose name she mentions, she says "I think, by the outward appearance, H——— is a Christian; but then, we can tell only on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart. How much difference" she says, "there is between the Christian and the sinner. I hope and pray, that none of us may have false hopes, but God will guide us if we believe in his name." The letter from which the above extracts were made, was dated Oct. 10, 1831. I have before me another letter, dated Oct. 11, 1831, which shows how great was her spiritual enjoyment at that time. She begins her letter by saying "I do hope that none of us may have false hopes. I pray for you a great deal in my mind: and it seems as though my prayers ascended up to the throne of grace.

O! E.——— it seems now as though I was in Heaven with my Saviour. Now he is mine, and I am his. It seems as though I could see my Saviour pouring down blessings more than I can receive, upon me. Our verse in the Bible yesterday, was 'Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy people.' And to day 'Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.'" So far was she from being satisfied with her attainments in piety that she often manifested great anxiety as to her Christian character, lest after all she might be deceived as to her hopes. Yet her conduct in the view of those who best knew her, was uniformly such as to inspire the strongest confidence that she was a true child of God.

CHAPTER VI.

Her little Bible, to which she was fondly attached, and which she often perused, bears ample evidence that it was a book she loved. "It looks," said a gentleman to me, "like an old minister's Bible every where marked with the pencil."

On the margin her little hand has drawn the lines which tell very plainly that her intellect and her heart were in her readings.

While turning over the leaves I could not but feel, what I have often felt before, how much real Christians are alike in every age.

There was something evidently in her bosom which responded to the feelings of him, who lived a Christian on the hill of Zion near three thousand years ago. Here was a practical illustration, how David felt when he wrote much of the 119th Psalm;—how he felt when in

the 19th Ps. he gave utterance to his feelings, as beautifully versified by Watts.

"I love the volume of thy word;
What light and joy those leaves afford
To souls benighted and distressed."

"Thy threatenings make me truly wise,
And warn me where my danger lies;
But 'tis thy blessed gospel, Lord,
That makes my guilty conscience clean,
Converts my soul, subdues my sin,
And gives the free, but large reward."

This was the feeling which deeply pervaded her bosom, as her Bible still remains to testify —a spirit which in her and in others is a spirit just bordering on heaven.

It is when the heart moves in unison with all revealed truth in the Bible, that it is made meet for an inheritance with the saints in light.

That child, or that aged professor, who does not love the Bible much, is very far from the spirit of David and of this little child—very far from heaven.

God talks to us in the Bible, and he who loves God will love to hear him speak.

How many of my readers never have loved their Bibles, so as to mark the precious spots

like this little child, and to dwell on them with the glowing ardor of her youthful soul.

It was with the same love to the Bible that she promised, before I left home for the winter, to commit one verse of the scripture every morning. I commenced with a number of the little ones of my charge who were seriously inquiring at this time, among whom was Florence.

She was always ready to engage in any exercise of this kind, and seemed pleased to be put upon a course which would lead her to know more of the word of God.

I have been deeply interested in taking her little Bible and remarking the verses that are crossed by her pencil.

The 3d verse of the fifth Psalm she has marked: "*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord: in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*"

I cannot doubt but all this was true in her practice, and that this verse was the utterance, the simple utterance of her feelings.

She did lift up her voice in the morning to God, and her prayer was heard.

Another passage marked is Isaiah 26: 3, 4.

"*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*"

"*Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*"

How this was made true, in her case, will be seen in the conclusion of this narrative.

Seldom is a peace more perfect, exhibited in the closing scene of life, than was seen in hers. Nor was her trust in God that vague and undefined confidence which is so often exhibited in many death scenes.

There was a definite trust in the *mercy* of God, inspired by, or grounded on, the deep feeling that she was a lost sinner. She mourned over her guilt and ingratitude, and went back to her father God, nothing doubting, that she was forgiven and loved by him still.

CHAPTER VII.

I was often struck with the promptness of her answers to my questions. It is *now* more evident to me than it was *then*, that they were the simple dictates of her heart.

"Did you always love God?" I enquired. "*No, Sir*," was the answer. "Did you once love to think of God and heaven?" No, Sir. "Did you once love to kneel down and hear your father pray for you at night?" No, Sir.

"But how do you feel now when all your little brothers and sisters come to prayers?"

"I love now to hear my father pray." The same state of feeling is illustrated by an incident which took place, during a protracted meeting held in this town at the time of her hopeful change.

Her father invited all his children, during the intermission of services, at noon, to meet

him in a retired chamber for prayer and reading the Bible. Several of them attended. As it was left to them to do as they pleased, some were absent at times, while little Florence was *always there.*

We could wish that all parents and children might often imitate this example. Let them thus retire and pray together if they hope to mingle their souls in heaven.

The same readiness to reply to my questions was apparent in respect to other points of religious experience.

"Do you love to have the Sabbath come, Florence?" "Yes, Sir. Once it seemed a long day, but now it don't. I love to think that the Sabbath day has come."

Such were her feelings in respect to the day which once hung heavy on her hands. She had, it seems, a *conscientious regard* to this day, as well as a *love* to its hours and its services.

Her father's house is more than half a mile from the church. This distance at times she used to walk with her little companions. And one of them observed to me a few days since:

"Before Florence was serious, she used on

the Sabbath to talk of every thing while walking to church, but after her change, she talked of religion."

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," is not less true of children than others.

I shall long remember her attentive and eager look, as she used to come into my vestry at the evening service, and seat herself very near to the desk, to listen to the word of life.

Her eye was evidently expressive of the feelings of her heart, and that heart was full of feeling. It was easy to speak the word of truth when there were many like her hanging on the lips of the speaker for instruction.

Often did I see the tear run down her cheek as the promises of kindness and love from Christ were told on her hearing.

She wiped away her tears and went home with a light heart, when I told her, Christ died for sinners; and that the same Jesus who took little children into his arms, was as ready and as willing to bless her as them. It was easy to perceive that this was a theme which quieted her troubled heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

Many of her companions will, I hope, long remember, how much she thought of Christ, and how she was accustomed to repeat some favorite hymns.

The following is one which she used to repeat in seasons of despondency and doubt.

Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:—
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?

If I love, why am I thus?
Why this dull, this lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
Who have never heard his name.

Could my heart so hard remain,
Pray'r a task and burden prove—
Ev'ry trifle give me pain—
If I knew a Saviour's love?

When I turn mine eyes within,
All is dark, and vain, and wild;
Fill'd with unbelief and sin—
Can I deem myself a child?

If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mix'd with all I do;
You who love the Lord indeed,
Tell me—is it thus with you?

Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all!

Lord decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art thy people's Sun:
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.

Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not lov'd before,
Help me to begin to-day.

Another, which illustrates her feeling in respect to the manner in which she expected to be saved, is this.

As the serpent, raised by Moses,
Heal'd the burning serpent's bite;
Jesus thus himself discloses
To the wounded sinner's sight.

Hear his gracious invitation:
"I have life and peace to give;
I have wrought out full salvation
Sinner, look to me and live.

You had been forever wretched,
Had I not espous'd your part:
Now, behold my arms outstretched,
To receive you to my heart.

Well may shame, and joy, and wonder,
All your inward passions move;
I could crush you with my thunder,
But I speak to you in love."

Dearest Saviour, we adore thee
For thy precious life and death;
Melt each stubborn heart before thee,
Give us all the eye of faith.

These hymns, of her own selection, show how her mind was operating during her short preparation for heaven. Happy child to ripen for glory so soon, and to enter into undisturbed rest!

CHAPTER IX.

Another practice to which allusion has been made, was to retire with her companions to talk and pray with them.

"She told me," says one, "to love God, and she asked me, if I should die to night, if I thought I should go to heaven. She said she thought *she* was prepared."

She told *me*, says another, "that I must love God, and when I died I should go to heaven—I must keep his commandments, serve him, and then I should be happy—Pray every night and morning in faith. She prayed with me," &c. &c."

Says a third, "She told *me* to love and serve God, that I might, when I died, go to heaven, and live with the angels."

From these few remarks yet remembered by her companions, it is evident she did not forget to do good.

May not these dear children, nor any who read this book, forget the exhortations of her youthful lips.

Such were her feelings and efforts, while she was ripening fast for the kingdom of God.

She labored and prayed to bring others to feel the happiness she felt, and she had the pleasure to see some loving her God and Redeemer.

She has gone a little before them to enter upon the joys, which they too will soon possess, if they live and die like her.

It is evident that she was led to think of death as not distant. One of her favorite hymns discloses her feelings in this particular while she was yet in health.

Oft as the bell with solemn toll,
Speaks the departure of a soul,
Let each one ask himself, "Am I
Prepared should I be called to die?

Only this frail and fleeting breath
Preserves me from the jaws of death;
Soon as it fails at once I'm gone,
And plung'd into a world unknown.

Then leaving all I lov'd below,
To God's tribunal I must go;
Must hear the Judge pronounce my fate,
And fix my everlasting state."

Lord Jesus! help me now to flee,
And seek my hope alone in thee;
Apply thy blood, thy Spirit give—
Subdue my sins and let me live.

Then when the solemn bell I hear,
If saved from guilt, I need not fear;
Nor would the thought distressing be,
Perhaps it next may toll for me.

By such thoughts as this hymn is calculated to inspire, death was not unexpected or dreadful when it came.

It was, as will be seen, only for her to go *home*—to the place of her strongest desires.

She felt, indeed, that she had earthly friendships, but friendships more precious in heaven, there too she hoped to renew her acquaintance and her intercourse with all her dear friends yet in this world. God had given her such a clear and affecting view of heaven, that it seemed little for her to relinquish life.

I remember to have inquired of Florence long before her death, if she thought she should be pleased to leave the world and to go and live with Christ. She did not hesitate to reply. "*Yes, Sir.*"

What! would you be willing to leave your father and mother and all your friends? "Yes,

Sir." It was easy to perceive in her, even when hope first began to dawn in her heart, that it was full of immortality.

The *sweetness of home* was all identified with the place, where God and Christ and angels dwelt.

Never have I seen, as in her, and in little ones of the same age, such perfect peace, in their reliance on the love of Christ. They seem to cast themselves into the arms of *his* kindness, as they throw themselves into the embrace of earthly parents, and all their fears are hushed. It was very manifest in the case of Florence, that she derived increasing confidence in all her approaches to God, that he would be *her* father and *her* God. "I went away and *prayed*, and I felt as though God would forgive me," was her reply, when I used to ask her, what made her feel so differently from what she *once* felt.

While I am sitting in my study, I seem again to renew these happy scenes of my pastoral life, and to gather these little lambs of the flock of Christ into my arms—I see them kneel down together, and lay their little faces

on the green sofa, still standing on the spot, where I committed them to God.

Yes, it was here that this little one now gone to God, began to lift up her heart with intense delight. That Pastor knows but a part of the pleasure of his work, who has never had the happiness of guiding the little children of his charge to Christ.

Their confidence *once* gained, and they pour out their hearts in all the simplicity of childhood, and awake the purest and happiest feelings in any heart, which is not most *unlike* its master, who, in heavenly kindness, took them into his arms and blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." But I will not detain my youthful reader from coming into the chamber of sickness, and seeing this dear child die. I hope they may all die as happy as Florence, and go and live where she is.

About this time, Oct. 1831, I was called to be absent from my charge on account of the ill health of my family. I did not see her again. Before my return she had left this world of trial for the joys of Heaven.

The Rev. Mr. Cozzens, now settled in the

ministry at Marblehead, supplied my place in my absence, and was privileged to watch this little one in her hours of trial, and aid her happy spirit to its God.

The remaining part of the narrative will be given in letters addressed to me by Mr. C.

A. WARNER.

Medford, Sept. 20, 1832.

LETTER I.

Medford, May 1, 1832.

Rev. and dear Sir,

In compliance with your wishes, I shall give you all the information in respect to Florence Kidder, which lies in my power.

Many of the facts of this interesting case came under my own personal observation; others were related to me by the friends of Florence who were with her in her sickness, and who watched around her dying bed.

I have no particular knowledge of her religious experience previous to her sickness, except what I have received from others. Every thing of this kind, relating to her history, your own recollection will readily supply, as I understand Florence was a hopeful subject of the revival, which existed in your society last summer and fall. From what I have been able to learn respecting the religious character of

this little girl, it would seem that her Heavenly Father, by bestowing upon her in such abundance, the riches of his grace previous to her sickness, had been preparing her for the deep afflictions through which, in his righteous providence, he soon called her to pass. For it was indeed in the morning of life, when her prospects of happiness and usefulness seemed most fair and promising, that she was suddenly called to relinquish all the fond pleasures she was enjoying in her Sabbath school and among her companions, whom she was accustomed to meet in the little praying circle, for the pains and trials of that distressing sickness, some particulars of which I will communicate in my next. Affectionately yours,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER II.

Medford, May 5, 1832.

Dear Sir,

In giving you some particular account of Florence, as I have been requested, so numer-

ous and interesting are the facts, I hardly know where to begin, or how to proceed. Very soon after her first attack, which was occasioned by a sudden and severe cold, the disease, which at first settled in the head, was found to be violent and unyielding in its progress. From the beginning, she was subjected to great bodily pain, which continued with but little abatement, and with often increased intensity through her whole sickness. As to bodily distress, she was indeed a *sufferer* in the strict sense of the word; but to her, these were light afflictions; for they were working out for her a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." From the commencement of her sickness to her death, as I have been informed, by one who had the particular care of her, and who was with her most of the time, night and day, she was never known to utter a murmuring word; or to manifest the least impatience under all her sufferings; but, as another remarked concerning her, "She was a pattern of meekness and resignation, feeling uniformly more for others, who were afflicted on her account, than she did for herself."

She spent much time in prayer. But when

in consequence of severe distress, she felt unable, as she would sometimes say, to form a prayer, she requested her Christian friends to pray by her bedside, that she might enjoy the privilege of uniting with them. When others prayed with her and for her, she said she felt great satisfaction in being able to follow them in her mind; and inquired with much earnestness, if they thought her prayers, offered in that manner, would be acceptable to God.

I have been much interested to learn with what peculiar satisfaction she reviewed the scenes, through which she passed last summer and fall. One day, while conversing with her grandmother, she said, "O! grandma, how glad I am that I went to inquiry meetings. O! you do not know, and never *can* know, how much I love God." Being asked how she felt, she very readily replied, "Better—much better; and I believe it is because I pray to God every night." She often called to mind the sweet seasons she had enjoyed in times past, with her companions in religious exercises; and whenever she thought of these, she would, for a time, seem almost to forget her sufferings, although they were so intense; and would

seem to be in an ecstacy of joy, as she endeavored to tell how much comfort she took last summer, and what satisfaction it was to her now, that she had conversed so much about personal religion with Mr. Warner, her minister. She said she hoped Ellen (her cousin and intimate friend,) would never forget the pleasant seasons they had enjoyed in the woods together, when they used to go away alone, and "read their Bible and Hymns;" and she hoped to meet her in Heaven. She would often say, she knew God to be her best friend, and that she took "more comfort" in having her friends pray and read the Bible in her hearing, than in any thing else they could do for her. Other particulars of interest must be deferred until my next. Yours with esteem,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER III.

Medford, May 12, 1832.

Dear Sir,

There is one topic connected with the history of Florence, during her sickness, which I have

often called to mind with special interest. It relates to the very clear views which she evidently entertained of Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour. She uniformly expressed strong love, and great reverence for Jesus Christ, on whose atoning blood alone, she relied for salvation. Her mother, coming into the room one day, and seeing her in such great bodily distress, that the sweat stood in drops on her face, said to her, "Florence, my dear, *how much you suffer.*" She looked up, and very cheerfully replied—"O! ma, this is nothing—nothing at all, to what my dear Saviour suffered for me. He sweat great drops of blood for me."

It gave her much uneasiness to see her friends afflicted on her account; and whenever they manifested signs of pity at witnessing her distress,—"Don't say a word," she would say,—"don't say a word, it is all right—'tis all right."

On Saturday, April 21, two days before her death, I visited her with a view to have particular conversation respecting her hopes and prospects for eternity. I found that she was rapidly declining, and that there was very lit-

tle prospect that she would ever again be restored. I asked her if she then felt willing to die, if her Heavenly Father should see fit to take her away. She replied, "I hope I do." I asked her in what she trusted for salvation; —she replied, "In the Saviour." It was remarked to her, "You may be assured that God will do all things right—and that he orders all things for your best good." "O, yes! yes!" was the reply; "I know he will do all things right."

At the time to which reference is here made, almost two months had passed away, during which time, her incurable disease had been gradually wasting the vigor of life; and it now appeared to be making most rapid advances, in hastening the scene of her final dissolution. It was very easy to perceive that her flesh was fast wasting away;—her strength was nearly exhausted, and the fitful hectic had already begun to bloom upon her cheek. Yet we did not anticipate that the closing scene was quite so near at hand as the event proved.

On the following Sabbath, prayers were offered for her in the public congregation. An arrangement had been previously made to in-

vite all the children who entertained hope that they were Christians, to meet in the vestry during the intermission on that day, for the purpose of receiving instruction, and of conversing on personal religion.

It was at the moment when I was making preparations to go to that meeting, that information was received that Florence was dying, and accompanied by her request that she might see me before she died. It was with emotions of no ordinary kind, you may be assured, that I hastened to witness a scene, which, though it proved not to be what we expected; yet which any individual might have considered himself highly privileged to behold; a particular account of which I will give you soon.

Yours truly,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER IV.

Medford, May 20, 1832.

Very Dear Sir,

It was on the 22d of April, being the Sabbath, *as before stated*, between the hours of

one and two, that Florence was supposed to be dying. When I first entered the room and saw the family group assembled around her bed in this hour of affliction and trial, my own feelings were such as I shall not attempt minutely to describe. The scene was truly affecting. But the melancholy produced by the first impression at witnessing a scene like this, was in a moment dissipated, as I approached nearer, and perceived how much occasion there was for joy even in the midst of grief; for the light of Heaven seemed to be reflected from the face of the child. Never shall I forget that look—that lovely smile that played around those death-like features, as the deep struggle, which we expected would be her last, passed away; and as the little sufferer revived; and gazing upward in rapture, explained in an audible voice "All is light before me"—"All is light before me." A few moments before I entered the room, when, as they all supposed she was in the last struggles of death, with an inexpressible look of holy triumph she exclaimed "O happiness:—happiness;—O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"—"Who can weep for her," said her af-

flicted parents. "If we weep, can we weep but for joy? for her condition is far better than ours, or that of any whom she leaves behind her." She had now so far revived as to be able to converse. The height of happiness to which she had been elevated had seemed to carry her entirely above earthly sufferings; and she seemed, as it were, reluctant to lose the bright vision and come back again to this world of toil and suffering. She was soon asked if she felt relieved at all from her distress;—she calmly replied, "I am easier now, and expect soon to be in Heaven." She then seemed to be holding communion with Heaven; for with uplifted eyes: and with a look and tone of holy submission, she, three times, in an audible voice, repeated the prayer, "not my will, but *thine*, O Lord, be done." She then seemed again almost to lose sight of earth, as she exclaimed—"Angels now stand waiting around to bear my spirit up to God." Surely a scene like this, needs no comment. We all beheld and admired—and could but exclaim inwardly in fullness of heart—O the wonders of grace!—the triumphs of redeeming love! Amid such joy as Florence had

experienced, she seemed almost to have forgotten that the clogs of mortality had not yet fallen off. Her physician coming into the room, she conversed with him with much composure, and promptly answered all his inquiries; although she appeared sensible that her body, then the seat of pain *and disease*, would very soon be mouldering in the dust. But her last struggle was yet to come. She was to speak other words for the good of those, whom she was soon to leave behind her. She was yet to give her last warnings and admonitions to the numerous circle of friends whom she so tenderly loved. Other particulars connected with the occasion introduced here, I will give at a future time. As ever, yours,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER V.

Medford, May 21, 1832.

Dear Sir,

I endeavored yesterday to give you some account of a scene, which to me was, I think,

the most interesting that I have ever witnessed in the chamber of sickness. After what had passed as related in my last communication, Florence seemed deeply to feel the importance of doing whatsoever her hand found to do, with her might. She appeared desirous of spending her last breath in the service of God; and in doing good to the souls around her. She soon called her weeping brothers and sisters around her dying bed, and affectionately taking each of them by the hand; with an inexpressible look of earnestness, and with a tone of the most persuasive tenderness, she said to them all—"*Do* love God, that you may meet me in Heaven." I then asked her what I should tell the children and youth in the Sabbath school from her, as her dying message to them. "O!" said she, with strong emphasis, "O! tell them all to love God, that they may die happy. Tell them all to meet me in Heaven."

Her own will seemed to be swallowed up in the will of her kind friend and merciful Father. She would exclaim, even when in great bodily distress—"O God is good; God *is* good;" To the question, "does Christ appear precious?"

she replied, with a look indicating a joy to which this world is a stranger, "O yes; precious—precious;—I shall soon be in Heaven."

To her cousin Mary, who was conversing with her about dying, she said—"Perhaps it is God's will that I should be spared;" but immediately added—"I had much rather die, than live, if God is willing." On the same occasion, speaking of her bodily sufferings, she said—"I can now bear up under pain, because God has prepared me for death."

Her symptoms soon became more alarming, and all hopes of her recovery were now relinquished. And as the hours of that holy Sabbath, the events of which I have been describing, passed away, Florence was fully sensible, that the remaining hours of her fleeting existence were rapidly passing with them. This, to her, had been the happiest Sabbath she had ever seen; although the last she ever expected to see on earth. It was to her, indeed a happy day; for it was a day in which she had clearly and fully gazed on the brightness of that eternal Sabbath of rest, which had already dawned upon her;—and she felt a confidence which all the terrors of death could not shake,

that her disembodied spirit, would soon dwell amid the full blaze of its light.

After returning from the evening service, I called once more, between the hours of nine and ten, to see Florence, as I doubted not for the last time in this world. The Sabbath had passed away, and the evening had brought with it no relief as to her sufferings: and but very little hope was entertained, that she would live to see the light of another day. I found her still perfectly happy and peaceful in her mind; entirely willing to wait until God should see fit to remove her from suffering. But He, who orders all events for his own glory, had yet other purposes to accomplish, through her instrumentality. That night passed away, and upon the light of another day, Florence was permitted to open her eyes. The morning came; but it was the time which was to terminate all her sufferings in this vale of tears. Further particulars must be deferred till the next.

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER VI.

Medford, May 24th, 1832.

Dear Sir,

Having been made acquainted with so many interesting circumstances in the short history of Florence, and having followed her to the last day of her sickness, I doubt not you feel anxious to hear further particulars; especially those connected with the closing scene of her life. One fact has been related to me by her Father, which has interested my own mind so much, that I shall venture to communicate it to you. Reference is here made to the morning on which Florence died. She had been distributing among her sisters and cousins, some little gifts which she had desired them to accept and keep, as tokens of remembrance.

She now recollected that she had some money which had not been disposed of. She immediately thought of the benighted heathen, who never knew that Saviour, in whom she had trusted, and who now appeared to her,

"the chiefest among ten thousand." She called her father to her bed, and pointing him to a small box of hers, desired him to bring it to her. It was the box which contained her money. The box was brought according to her request. She tried to take the money out with her little hand; but found herself too weak to succeed in the attempt. Her father, then, held her cold hand in his, while the pieces of money, as she desired, were poured into it. She then put them back into her father's hand, and told him to put it all into the missionary box.

She saw her mother standing by her bedside, weeping. The little sufferer was at that moment too exhausted to speak. But although she could not speak with her tongue; yet feeble as she was, she still found means to utter the strong language of that spirit, that still struggled within her. As she saw her mother's tears, with a bright smile upon her countenance, but with no tear in *her* eye, she first looked up wishfully into her mother's face; and then endeavoring to lift her little hand, which was now already chilled with the frosts of death, she significantly pointed her finger upward, as if to say—"Mother, weep not for

me—for there is rest in Heaven." Language fails in attempting to describe a scene like this. It was the eloquence of the soul in its last struggles to break away from the clogs of mortality, to seek its native Heaven. Nature was now almost exhausted; and as the last hour approached, and the struggles of death came over her; even in the last agonies, as this world was receding from her view, and the heavenly world opened in full prospect before her, she still talked of angels that stood waiting around to conduct her spirit to Heaven. And still she had strength to speak forth in broken accents, the raptures she felt in view of her eternal home.

I was not with her when she died; although I should have felt myself privileged to be present.—The remaining particulars which I will narrate in the next letter, were given by those who witnessed her triumphant departure from this world of sin and suffering, into the paradise of God, where are pleasures forevermore.

Affectionately yours,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER VII.

Medford, May 25, 1832.

Dear Sir,

I have already intimated that Florence died in the full triumphs of faith. This is indeed true in an eminent degree. The same religion that so wonderfully supported her amid the intense bodily suffering which she endured, caused her finally to triumph in her last struggles. To those friends who stood around her in this trying time, she exclaimed, "My sufferings are almost over." Then looking upward, she said, "O Lord, come quickly." She then said, "I am going—I am going—Come Lord Jesus, come quickly—O Lord, receive me;"—and, with this prayer upon her lips, she died.

The Wednesday following, which was the 25th of April, her funeral was attended. And although her body now sleeps in the dust, yet who can doubt that her spirit rests in Heaven. The green grass will indeed spring up over her grave; and over her ashes the flowers of

summer will bloom; while her spirit is *flourishing* in *immortal* bloom; and, while her name on earth will long live embalmed in the memory of those who loved her, and who had the best opportunity of knowing her worth. All who knew the history of Florence cannot fail in that to see exhibited in a very remarkable degree, the happy effects of early piety. She seemed like a flower that only bloomed to die;—which came forth and withered in an hour; but not without sending forth a fragrance, and exhibiting a beauty which attracted the admiration of all who beheld it. Although it withered here, yet it is now transplanted into a more genial clime, where it will forever flourish and bloom in unfading beauty.

I do not remember ever to have witnessed a case which, to my own mind, more clearly and more forcibly exhibits the triumphs of the Christian religion. Who could witness what was exhibited in that child, without feeling that the religion of Christ has a power, to which this world is a stranger. When I looked upon that child, only eleven years old, and heard her talk about dying, without seeming to discover the least emotion of fear;—when I

saw her suffering so much pain without uttering a murmuring word;—when I heard her telling others not to weep for her;—when I beheld her looking at Death as he appeared before her, clothed in terrors, without the least apparent agitation, and with such a serene smile on her countenance;—when I heard her talk with such raptures of the joys she experienced—of the preciousness of her Saviour—of the goodness and mercy of God—of the blessedness she saw before her;—and when I heard her express such longing desires to depart and be with Christ;—as I witnessed all this—O! thought I; what a lesson of instruction does an example like this convey even to *believers;* and those of riper years than Florence. Indeed, what *believer* can witness a death thus triumphant, without feeling that his faith takes a stronger hold on things unseen and eternal.

Affectionately yours,

S. W. Cozzens.

LETTER VIII.

Medford, May 26, 1832.

Dear Sir,

At the close of my last letter, I was just indulging in a reflection or two, in view of the interesting case presented in the death of Florence, as it regards the lessons of practical instruction which the living ought to derive from an example so striking—may I not say so illustrious? If the tendency of such an example *should* be to strengthen the faith of believers, what conviction ought it to produce on the minds of unbelievers? Could even the cold hearted sceptic witness a scene like that which I have attempted to describe—could he see a Christian die as that child died:—and could he turn away from beholding it, and be a sceptic still? Or, could he have traced the progress of that disembodied spirit in its upward flight, as it threw off the clogs of mortality, and mounted up to its native Heaven;—could he have known the rapture of that soul, as it seiz-

ed the golden harp to strike a note that angels never sung; *could* he have longer doubted the reality—the excellency—the *glory* of that religion which raises sinful men from the dust of earth to eternal blessedness in heaven!

Thus, my dear Sir, have I endeavored in this hasty and imperfect manner, to give you a particular account of the sickness and death of this little girl, of whom you have before spoken, with so much interest, in your letters to Medford.

I cannot but indulge the hope, that this dispensation, although so deeply afflictive to all who had the happiness of an acquaintance with Florence, will be sanctified to us all in this place—especially to the numerous circle of youth and children, with whom she was connected in the Sabbath school, and to whom, she being dead, still speaks. I have endeavored faithfully to communicate to them her dying message, which she entrusted to me, and which she delivered with so much interest and concern for their spiritual welware. Yes! Florence has exchanged this world of sin for a brighter world, where pleasures never die. We cannot weep for her. She charged all her

friends, as she saw them around her dying bed, not to weep for her. A little while before she died, she recollected a hymn which she had seen, and which so fully expressed the feelings of her heart, that she desired it to be found and read. The following is the hymn.

"Weep not for me!
When the spark of life is waning,
Weep not for me.
When the languid eye is sealing,
Weep not for me.
When the feeble pulse is ceasing,
Start not at its swift decreasing;
'Tis the fettered soul's releasing;
Weep not for me.
When the pangs of death assail me,
Weep not for me.
Christ is mine—he cannot fail me,
Weep not for me.
Yes, though sin and doubt endeavor
From his love, my soul to sever,
Jesus is my strength forever,
Weep—weep not for me."

With kind regards, and wishes for your personal happiness, I remain yours, as ever,

SAMUEL W. COZZENS.

Rev. AARON WARNER.

CHAPTER X.

It is difficult to close this narrative, without expressing the wish that all children may die like this dear child—that they may find her peaceful grave, and her happy heaven.

In the Frontispiece they may observe her, by the high rock, kneeling down.

There, little child, *you* may see how Florence learned to die; there under the lofty tree, and in the open air, she prayed, and wept, and loved God.

I cannot here omit to let little children see how their good parents feel, when they are called to lay them in their graves. Speaking of little Florence in a letter to me, her father observes.

Medford, April 22, 1832.

* * * * In the afternoon of this day, instead of waiting on God in his earthly courts,

I was called to attend the dying bed of a dear child. Little Florence was a flower early matured by grace, and early transplanted from this world, to flourish in the garden of God,—just as this beautiful bud began to expand, the frost of death nipped it, and it now lies in the cold grave. Yes, our dear little Florence is gone from us,—rather shut from our sight, and lives in the paradise of God, and we are left to mourn—to rejoice *rather*,—for although we weep that we shall see her face no more in the flesh, yet through the mercy of our Heavenly Father, we sorrow not as those without hope, for, my dear Pastor, such a death, or rather such a *triumph over death*, and the grave.—O for a sense of the goodness of God.

* * * * * * * * * * *

While her happy spirit, now just released from its clayey tabernacle, was taking its upward flight,—and while she yet lay on the bed of death, around which we continued to linger, weeping, and rejoicing, we felt it a duty, and a privilege, to unite in giving thanks to God, for all that he had done for her, and for us.

May God grant, my dear Sir, as the reward of your efforts for her good, that you may

meet this dear lamb of your flock, in the fold of the good Shepherd, and may we all so "love God," as to meet there to part no more forever.

Sabbath Day, April 29th. Mr. Cozzens preached a sermon this afternoon, addressed to children, and especially adapted to their capacities. Text, Psalms 34th chapter, 11th verse. "*Come ye children hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*" Mr. C. introduced in the sermon in a very affecting and impressive manner, much of the dying and other experience of our dear little Florence, God grant that it may do them good, and be the means of leading them so to "love God," that they too, "may die happy," and "meet her in Heaven."

I come now my dear Sir, to relate another most afflicting dispensation of Him, who gave, and who hath taken away, and may the language of my heart be,—blessed be his name. I had just left the house of God, where we had been asking prayers that the death of our Florence might be sanctified to us—when I was

met by a messenger hastening for the Doctor, as our little Edward, it was feared was dying. The little sufferer, lingered until about 4 o'clock Monday morning, when his spirit took its flight, I trust, to join his sister, who had departed just one week previous; within a few hours. His funeral is appointed to take place the same day, and hour, this week (Wednesday,) that little Florence's took place last week.

Thus my dear Sir, has our Heavenly Father brought us to part with two of our dear little ones in less than one week,—but we are comforted in the belief, that they are now the little ones of Christ in Heaven, and that they have gone home *first*,—may we through grace follow them, and there, my dear Pastor, may you, and yours, and we all, meet at last to be forever with the Lord.

May 2d.—We have to-day followed our dear little Edward to the house appointed for all living, he was laid beside his little sister Florence who had been just one week a tenant of the same house of death;—when the babe was deposited in his last resting place, I requested that the lids of both coffins might be opened, and descended into the tomb, where rested together,

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